

ANIRIAL

Belfast Anarchist Bi-monthly March/April No. 3

Six Counties 15p
Elsewhere 20p

**SELLAFIELD
SHITS ON
OUR SHORES**

CONTENTS
**Anglo-Irish,
Lignite,
Germany,
Supergrass.**



WELCOME BACK!

Welcome back to Ainriail! This issue, our third, has been brought out after a gap of some five months. The reasons for such a delay are varied, but mainly it is due to the small number of us involved, and our commitments to other political projects.

We are attempting once again to bring out the paper on a regular basis, in a less ambitious way, by making it bi-monthly.

We invite anyone who shares our politics to contribute, either by passing information, writing articles, sending graphics. We welcome criticism which will contribute to constructive debate.

If you would like to join us, or even just to find out more about our group, then write to -

AINRIAIL,
c/o Just Books,
7, Winetavern St.,
Belfast 1.



Campaign Videos

A weekend of video screenings, with the theme of 'campaign videos', will be held in Conway Mill, Belfast, on the 22nd and 23rd, March.

Work from Derry and Dublin, as well as Belfast, will be shown; and subjects covered will include plastic bullets, strip-searches, women and health, and 'supergrasses'.

Discussions, ranging from broadcast television to community campaigns, will be an integral part of the weekend.

Admission is free; further information can be had from NIFVA, c/o 9, Winetavern St. telephone 245495.

Anglo-Irish Accordion Band

The recent loyalist strike has been the highest point, so far, of loyalist opposition to the Anglo-Irish Accord. But the strike itself threatens to break the previous loyalist unity. The nature of the Accord, and responses to it, are the latest developments in an increasing conflict between the British state and loyalism as to Britain's role in Ireland.

Sunningdale

The British and Irish states have been trying unsuccessfully, individually and together, to stabilise the North. The most successful joint effort to date has been the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973. On that occasion the involvement of the Official Unionists was both an advantage and a handicap. Their resignation from the Assembly proved to be the breaking of the

weakest link in the chain, when faced with the loyalist strike of '74.

Accord

The Anglo-Irish accord of last Nov. left the O.U.P. out. It was an agreement between London and Dublin. The three main points are:

- * Recognition by Dublin that the North will not join with the South without the consent of a majority in the north.
- * An 'Intergovernmental Conference' which will allow the south to make recommendations to the British government, which it is bound to listen to.
- * Both governments are committed to the establishment of a devolved government in the north.

It is apparent from the accord, which will be lodged at the U.N., that the south has

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GOOD GRIEF!



The internationally unknown opinion-maker, Silas Arbuthnot, returns to our columns.

Ian Paisley, before the Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed, warned it would take Ulster down the road to Dublin, which was the road to anarchy. This would seem to be an extraordinary break through the geographical boundaries of this particular form of political philosophy. Of course, everybody knows anarchy resides in Winetavern St., Belfast BT1 1JQ. However after the signing of the agreement, Paisley put anarchy firmly in its place. He threatened to create a state (sic) of anarchy in Ulster, WITHIN THE LAW, that is, according to the British paper, 'The Sunday Telegraph'.

Before one is tempted to discourse the parameters of the geomorphological forms, or indeed, the pathological symptoms, of anarchy, one feels that the geographical allegories of loyalism should be further examined, as far as humanely possible, despite one's misgivings.

Loyalists have hijacked the Polish 'Solidarity' logo. They would like to convey an image of the authoritarian imperialism of an outside country imposing its will and dogma on an independent sovereign state. Their logic would seem to be Up the Pole, Down the Pope.

Before one misgives, one must travel the Carson trail to the Phillipines. Peter Robinson, Paisley's assistant, preached a sermon to the rioting fascists outside

the Belfast City Hall on People Power, not to be confused with anarchy. He compared the people of Belfast with the people of Manila seeking their democratic civil rights. He did not expand on the overthrow of a demagogic, dictatorial, senile bully. Perhaps Peter wouldn't look so sweet in a yellow suit.

One would like the reader to finish this article before reaching for the largactil. We must press on with the contradictions. Enoch Powell, 'Facing the Press' on TV, asked viewers to contemplate a geographical comparison so that the viewers understanding of the problems of Normal Ireland could be enhanced. He asked them to imagine that Yorkshire had 17 M.P.s and three of these wanted to unite (not re-unite) with Germany. London and Berlin would sign an agreement to this effect. He pointed out that this would be a denial of the democratic rights of the majority of Yorkshire folk. They would not wish to be governed by an alien country with an alien culture. He did not point out that Yorkshire shares its boundaries with other English counties and that there was a considerable amount of cold water between Yorkshire and Germany. One is tempted to interpret the allegory in another way, isn't one. The silly old idiot.

Which takes us back to anarchy. Recently anarchist bookshop in Ireland received a card from an admirer in Finland. The card is printed below along with the sentiment written on the back.

Perhaps the loyalists could invite this person over to write Harold McCusker's speeches.



'Peace for Ireland and her struggle, Martyrs and the Old Celtic Folk.' (!)

Subversive Creche

Date for answer: 27.6.85

27 June 1985

Written No:

MR JOHN M. TAYLOR (Solihull): To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what plans he has to ensure that Government financial support for community activities is not used to foster the aims and objectives of paramilitary interests.

Community groups and centres in West Belfast and Derry have recently been described as 'provo fronts' by the SDLP. Last year a similar accusation was made by the Secretary of State. Now some grants going to groups and centres in West Belfast and parts of Derry are under threat.

ACE Schemes

ACE (Action for Community Employment) Schemes were first introduced to help reduce unemployment - though not by creating properly paid unionised jobs! ACE Schemes service 'bona fide' voluntary groups and local councils by paying 90% of the employee's wage (ca. £64 pw) with the remaining 10% to be raised by the employing group. Because the jobs are only for a period of 52 weeks the employment acts do not apply - over-time, maternity rights etc.. Local authorities have been using ACE workers and making full time workers redundant. Despite these and other problems with ACE jobs they can be used in a variety of ways which are not exploitative and do not fall into the trap of creating employer/employee relationships within local groups. Community groups who get involved in local initiatives can use ACE schemes to pay some money to themselves while meeting locally defined and controlled needs. In this way groups who for years have been involved in unpaid work in their communities can use (as opposed to being used themselves) ACE schemes to help fund projects.

Conway Mill Womens' Self-help Group

One such group is the Conway Mill Womens' Self-help group. They set up a creche in the Mill (in the Lower Falls) about three years ago. There was no other creche in the area despite a very large population of young children. The creche ran for over two years on a completely voluntary basis catering for 2 - 4 year olds. In February '85 the Womens group applied for funding for two ACE workers to run the creche. They got this funding. But four months later they were abruptly informed that their funding would be withdrawn.

The Subversive Creche

The reason given was that the Secretary of State (Hurd at the time) reckoned that by funding some community groups' schemes it would give rise to a 'grave risk of directly or indirectly improving the standing and furthering the aims of a paramilitary organisation'. So the total of £84.55 p.w. for two ACE workers was cut off. A paramilitary group would have to be pretty hard up to take two peoples only weekly wage totalling £84 to improve their standing and further their aims!!

Obviously Hurd's statement was only an excuse to close down (or at least

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attempt to) the creche. The real reason seems to have more to do with sectarian decisions to thwart and destroy attempts by working class people to organise independantly around local needs. Other activities in the Mill include educational programmes, various meetings, a summer school, night classes, concerts, exhibitions etc. The state obviously recognises the potential of centres and groups like these and seems determined to attempt to destroy them.

'Provo-fronts'

In the last few weeks an SDLP member, Brian Feeley (whose constituency is North Belfast - not West!) demanded that all government grants to community groups and centres in West Belfast be cut off because they act as 'provo-fronts'.

It's obvious that the SDLP dislike as much as the Sec. of State the idea of people defining and dealing with their own problems. No doubt the SDLP would much rather set up community and advice centres controlled by themselves!

Apart from such blatant politicking by the SDLP such assertions can have very serious implications for people working in, and using, groups and centres at the minute. Effectively these SDLP statements have set up many people for assassination by loyalist paramilitary groups as well as for increased harassment by the 'security forces'.

Resistance

Community groups are resisting these and other attempts to destroy them. This resistance is vital. For many people such groups are the only ways of coming together locally and trying to regain power over what happens them and their communities.

GETTING IT WRONG

All art is political. Art to a greater or lesser extent examines or reflects the society in which we live. Well why not?

But what's this community art?

Was it a term conjured up years ago by some trendy Arts Council Review body to safely marginalise the growing pressure for money by organising the masses who wanted a piece of the cultural cake?

'High' art is the propaganda of the bourgeoisie. Its ideology and massive subsidies were to be protected but a few tokens could be scattered to the large number of competing and newly categorised 'community' arts groups.

Now, in Belfast, the 'organised community' art activists, in their attempt to remain non-sectarian, non-party political etc., have

evolved a policy of avoiding controversial issues, which are the life blood of creative energies. They have perpetuated division and subverted subversion, and in their illusion of creating democracy in the arts have channelled people into elaborate mindless activity.

They retain the illusion that their imperialist interventions are somehow socially relevant. Anyone, of course, who wishes to use their resources to reflect or challenge what is happening around them will be fucked off. (It's too political, divisionary, radical or naughty and if the Arts Council get wind of it, likely to jeopardise next years grant).

The latest hoax is a conference entitled 'Arts and Social Change in Ireland' (Art

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WHO'S ENTHUSED?

The remarkable commitment over the years, shown by the people involved in the Bun Scoil on Belfast's Shaws Rd., was spoiled by the 'official' opening in February.

Since 1971, voluntary donations raised by teachers, parents and friends, have sustained Belfast's first Irish language primary school. However, last year the Dept. of Education were formally persuaded into providing grants for the small complex of pre-fab buildings. Hence the 'official' opening.

This opening was attended by bank-managers, architects etc., but not a parent was to be seen. The people who had done most of the fund-raising, and whose children were the basis of the school, were not invited. 'Parents day' was the following day, when nothing special was laid on.

Cardinal O'Fiaich, Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of all-Ireland, Tri-linguist (Irish, English, and lying) was invited to 'officiate' at the 'official' opening.

He was relaxed and jovial, able to mix equally well with toddler and teacher.

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knows no boundaries). It is organised by ARE, NOW, WEA, and something calling itself Community Art For Everyone.

The conference endorses the ideology of the Arts Council in its artificial creation of the 'community' arts division. There's no chance even to publicly challenge it as the arts council aren't even represented on the panel. Instead we have mostly state paid professionals who are unlikely to spit on the Arts Council, or City Council for fear

After he celebrated mass and fed his face, he said that no religious demonimation had exclusive rights to the language, that protestants and catholics had both made contributions to its preservation and development.

The school was described as an independent maintained school, non sectarian, and open to all religious denominations. O'Fiaich was invited because he was a 'friend', not because he was a 'churchman'.

What cant! What hypocrisy! If the school is 'independent etc., why was its 'official' opening so steeped in the catholic religion? Why was Ireland's most powerful catholic cleric asked to officiate? Why was the Irish language, music, singing, and dancing associated with only a catholic ceremony?

It is no good language enthusiasts and activists pointing out the role of protestants and atheists in past struggles, no good explaining that the 'Shankill' is an Irish name. If the language revival is so closely associated with such a reactionary institution as the catholic church, then who can expect non-catholics and socialists to be enthusiastic?

of endangering their careers and future grants.

The conference could have been a forum for all those dissident groups who have been denied funding. It could have articulated and collectivised demands in seeking to undermine the state machinery in its patronage for the arts. WE should decide where our money is spent, and not committees whose interests are in supporting the 'nice' groups, who hinder real development of expression.

from both parties in Downpatrick want over thirty travelling families moved from a vacant industrial site in Downpatrick. Their presence is jeopardising prospects of attracting new industry to the area! And we thought it had something to do with Thatcher's economic policies!

Go, Move, Shift!

As ever, the SDLP and the Workers Part, are continuing to be concerned about creating employment. To this end councillors

effectively given up its constitutional claim over the north.

Also the 'Conference' allows the south to advise and complain, but Britain has no obligation to act on this, merely to listen, as they have done on issues such as strip-searching, supergrasses, etc., etc.!

A devolved government would amount to little more than a form of 'local government', but is obviously the carrot to persuade the loyalists to go along.

Benefits

There is nothing in the above that detracts from Britain's 'Direct Rule'. If anything, it now has the 'official' consent of Dublin in its rule here. A major propaganda coup, which will go down well in the U.S.A. and Europe.

The benefits for the south are increased respectability for the SDLP, at the expense of Sinn Fein, and credibility with the middle classes in the south, who at last can see 'progress'.

Not an inch

The loyalists however don't see it that way. Even the south's recent rush to sign an extradition with Britain hasn't softened the blow. As far as the mass of loyalists are concerned, it's just the first step to Dublin rule.

The 'settler' paranoia of loyalism has been well enough documented elsewhere. Suffice it to say that a sniff of offering equality to 'Taigs', whether in housing for working class people in '69 or in political control in '73 for the middle classes has led to the battle-cry 'Not an Inch'.

The Loyalist opposition, up to now, has been dominated by the DUP and OUP parliamentary parties. The mass rally in Belfast, the mini-election in February and the refusal to strike a rate were their hallmarks. The threatened withdrawal from

"People are capable of thinking for themselves that they MUST support the stoppage", Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the DUP.

education and health boards will also be their work. But the rallies, the election, and the withdrawals are making no impact. Direct Rule continues. Dublin-London meetings continue.

Strike

The strike was something different. But its impact may not be the desirable one, certainly as far as the OUP is concerned. The OUP's Molyneux has said he will not support another strike.

Monday 2nd March's strike was 'effective'. It closed down most of the north's businesses and traffic. The reasons for this are easy to see. The two largest employers of labour in Belfast - the shipyards and Shorts - are made up of almost totally loyalist workforces. Ballylumford power station in Larne has an equal reputation for fairness in employment. The blocking of roads with trees and tractors was rarely interfered with by the RUC. Pickets were able to prevent cars getting through to workplaces, while the RUC looked on. A revealing contrast was the attitude and behaviour of the police to the British miners' strike.

Violence

It was the level of intimidation and later rioting against the police, which will shake the uneasy alliance between the likes of the OUP and the UDA. Car burning, petrol bombs and automatic gunfire occurred late into the night.

And the response of the state? The army was not called in, no gunfire was returned, only 50 arrests were made, although eventually sixty five plastic bullets were fired. This scenario would have been unbelievable if it had occurred in anti-unionist areas.

It is important to remember that the loyalist response, that their violence is motivated, not with a desire to create a more just, freer society, but to protest against concessions to 'Taigs' to protest that not enough is being done to keep them down and if the British state won't do it properly then we can expect an increasing role for the UDA and the UVF.

Within a recent period of five weeks, five 'incidents' have occurred at the Windscale nuclear reprocessing plant in Cumbria, England. This has raised doubts, not only about the ability of the plant's management to prevent accidents, but also about the everyday functioning of Windscale, later to be called Sellafield because of its bad image.

CENTERPIECE

As Britain's centerpiece in the nuclear industry, Sellafield is involved in two crucial areas - that of reprocessing nuclear waste from not only Britain, but also Japan and Italy. This reprocessing provides plutonium fuel for fast breeder reactors, which generate electricity. It is reckoned that up to 11,000 people are employed at Windscale, and the business is worth £600 million a year to British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.

The plutonium produced is also used for military purposes. Interestingly, Windscale was first constructed in 1952 to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons.

POWER FOR CONTROL

Despite claims that it is clean and cheap, nuclear energy is the most pollutant and expensive of fuels. The real reason for preference for this form of energy lies closer to the issue of control.

The two major miners' strikes have shown the vulnerability of the state and capitalism to organised labour. With coal at the center of industrial reliance on electricity, the NUM proved to be a restraining force on capitalism's excesses.

But with electricity increasingly produced by nuclear power plants, and these plants being subject to little union control, the official Secrets Act, and a special Nuclear Police force, capitalism has less restraints. The centralisation of the nuclear industry also mirrors the centralisation of state power. It is much easier for the state to police such an industry and its workforce, than in the coalfields and the coal and oil power plants.



LEAKS

The leaks seemed to have occurred with unusual frequency. At least the reported leaks have. For many people now suspect that more leaks have occurred throughout the years than BNFI have admitted.

Greenpeace at their Belfast launching at the end of February, claim 300 leaks have occurred. But this figure does not (and cannot) include those leaks which have successfully been covered up. BNFI have on most occasions given false initial information. Recent examples include the delay of three days, before admitting that an extra 400 kilogrammes of uranium was dumped into the Irish Sea on 23rd January this year. Just over a week later, on Feb. 5th BNFI announced that the escape of fine spray containing plutonium, was contained within a building, and only two people had been contaminated. It later transpired that the mist had escaped into the atmosphere (it snowed in Belfast that day!) and 11 workers were contaminated.

DISCHARGES

The leaks themselves are merely the tip of the iceberg, and while worrying for both

the workers on the site, and people living in the vicinity, they pale in comparison to the constant discharge of radioactive waste into the Irish Sea.

The Irish Sea has become the most radioactive sea in the world. Over two million gallons of radio-active waste are being discharged everyday from Sellafield. This amounts to 90% of the nuclear waste discharged in all of Europe.

The effects of this are difficult to finger exactly, because of the low level of radiation emitted. But the problem with radioactive materials is that no level is a safe level. What is of concern to people in Cumbria, Scotland, and the entire east coast of Ireland is that the plutonium, which is discharged, has a life span of 30,000 years. An accident in 1957, as the result of a fire, was the most obviously dangerous and led to a report by two doctors on a class of school girls from Drogheda. They found that there was a strong suggestion of a link between that release and the high level of leukaemia and cancer among the girls and later examples of Downs Syndrome among some of their children.

OPPOSITION

The constant discharges have led to protests along the Irish coast. Dun Laoghaire and Newry and Mourne District councils have called for the plants closure. Meetings have been held in Cushendun, Co. Antrim (where five cases of leukaemia have been detected in children) and in Belfast.

Around Strangford and Downpatrick in Co. Down, the problem is exacerbated by the microwave relay station at Bishops-court RAF base. Signs around the base warn that radiation is found in the air above three metres!

It is understandable, but ultimately self-defeating, for the small fishing industries on the Co. Down coast to ignore the danger. Naturally they are frightened for their jobs if people stop buying fish caught in the Irish Sea, especially shell and flat fish, which live on the sea bed. But silence will not stop the discharges.

CLOSE IT NOW!

There is no doubt that Sellafield must close. All initiatives should be supported, such as the recent decision to sail the Greenpeace monitoring ship close to the site. Unions must be encouraged to put lives, and rational energy planning, before 'jobs at any price'. Public meetings, and council resolutions must be followed up. The lethal pollution of our coastline is another example of the contempt with which British capitalism and its state regards the people on this island, as well as its own working class.

For the next ten years, Sellafield will cost £1million per day investment in plant maintenance and improvement. An alternative which the government are considering, is to move most of its work to Dounreay, on the north-east of Scotland. But as radioactive discharges and leaks will continue, Dounreay must also be opposed.

'Supergrasses' Still

The use of 'supergrasses' as a method of incarceration and intimidation continues. The Kirkpatrick trial ended in mid-December, and the Black appeal by 22 people, is rumoured to last till June. Meanwhile 11 people are charged on the word of Angela Whoriskey from Derry.

HEAVY SENTENCING

The name Carswell will not be forgotten easily by the 27 people who were convicted on the uncorroborated word of Harry Kirkpatrick. This judge not only perpetrated an increasingly blatant system of repression, but was single-minded in the viciousness of his sentencing.

Ten people were given life sentences, Gerard Steenson receiving a recommended sentence of 25 years. This contrasts with Kirkpatrick's own sentence for life, without recommendation, despite confessing to 5 murders. Despite rebuttals from the NIO, it is obvious that as part of its deal with Kirkpatrick he will be offered early release. He told his sister that he would only have to serve 4 years.

The remaining 17 men were given between 5 and 20 years. Of these, the vague 'conspiracy' charge was used to deal out the heaviest sentences. Three people were sentenced to 15 years each for conspiracy to murder. In Jimmy Brown's case, as no one was ever killed, this meant conspiracy to do something, which never happened! For possession charges (without 'intent') for which previous defendants have either received small sentences, or even walked free, five people got between 8 and 15 years, Paul Donnelly receiving the largest.

Carswell was only appointed a Diplock judge last year, and is obviously eager to justify his position in this well-known sectarian profession (maybe the Fair Employment Agency should investigate!). He previously worked as a Q.C. and was part of the prosecuting team in the Black trial in 1981. Interestingly, another member of that team, Appleton, was chief prosecutor in the Kirkpatrick trial.

HUNGER STRIKE

Immediately the guilty verdicts were announced, in the week before Xmas, a hunger strike was declared. The defendants refused to hear their sentences and Bobby Tohill announced that he was to begin a fast to death. Over the next two weeks, two others were to join - Gerard Steenson, and Ta Power. These last two men had been in prison for almost four years before their 'conviction' (equivalent to an eight year sentence) and had the experience of being charged under four previous 'supergrasses', who either retracted or had their evidence thrown out.

The two demands of the hunger strike were for an early date to be set for an appeal, and an independent review of all convictions based on uncorroborated evidence. It lasted 18 days, and ended in a cloud of confusion.

PROBLEMS

Problems seemed to have arisen from the beginning. The demands were not very specific. What was an 'early date' for their appeal, and more importantly who was to appoint the independent review group? The British government?

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Also, the Relatives for Justice Group seemed at times to be kept as much in the dark as the rest of us. When the NIO announced the strike over, the RFJ could only say that they had received no confirmation, and assumed it was still on.

The central problem seemed to be the lack of communication between the prisoners themselves, and also with the outside RFJ group. It appeared that Bobby Tohill took the initiative and called off his hunger-strike, without consultation with the other two strikers. And it is assumed that they were forced to come off it, because the 'carpet was pulled from beneath them, publicity-wise.

LOBBYING

There was also some public frustration as to how the campaign outside was progressing. The RFJ had decided that the chief strategy was lobbying, in order to persuade those who had 'influence and power' to use it with the British government.

Hence, a campaign of contacting people such as attorney King in the USA, and Archer of the British Labour Party. There were calls too for 'the Churches' to stand up and be counted. Cardinal O'Fiaich was visited, and Bishop Daly opportunistically called up to Cathy Tohill's house, uninvited, to show his 'concern'.

The Anglo-Irish accord became the main target for exerting pressure. The SDLP's John Hume and the Irish Foreign Minister, Barry, were called upon, both through the press and through visits, to use the ministerial meetings with King and Thatcher to further the demands.

To a limited extent this lobbying succeeded. Barry and Archer had already expressed discontent with the 'supergrass' system. Hume, O'Fiaich and King, had already expressed opposition, as did the majority of political parties in Ireland, including the DUP. It is suggested that the announcement by Hume and O'Fiaich of support for the hunger strike demands, was instrumental in Bobby Tohill's decision to come off.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

But this sort of activity entailed only a small number of people, the relatives, travelling to meet 'powerful' people. The majority of anti-unionists shared the anger of the strikers. They had only 4½ years earlier come out in their thousands to march, occupy, and protest in support of the 'political status' hunger-strike.

But no pickets were called. No demonstrations, no meetings. That level of opposition to the 'supergrass' system had no outlet. Whether it would have developed its own expression, if the strike had continued, is open to debate.

Certainly I feel that people like O'Fiaich, Hume and Barry are the class enemy. Archer is a colonial class enemy, despite his Labour credentials. When has persuasion and discussion ever brought us victory. The political bosses won't 'give' us anything. They will have to be forced to ease their repression.

The ruling classes are not one monolithic block. In Ireland, the Catholic middle and ruling classes, will on occasion opportunistically back up the demands of anti-imperialists. Hume's and O'Fiaich's public support came

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BRINGING IRELAND TO GERMANY & SWEDEN

At the beginning of December, a tour was organised for a member of the Ainriail group by an anarchist contact in W.Germany. It was agreed that the video on Plastic Bullets (with permission from the campaign) would provide a useful focal point for discussion.

There were three venues in W.Germany, and three in Sweden, ranging from a school to a squat. It was the second such tour, the previous one in '84 limited to W.Germany, and with the supergrass video as the centrepiece. A German comrade gave up much of his time to travel around the country, translate the video and interpret the discussions. Thanks to Black Star Press.

BASE GROUP

Starting off in the university town of Gottingen, the meeting was organised by the English language department's 'Base-group'. They had previously done much work countering British government propaganda, and as the organisers of the tour, ensured a wide-ranging debate.

Some people were already aware of the plastic bullet weapon, but others were shocked, and their reaction was compounded by the knowledge that the judicial system acts as a mere whitewash for the murderers in the British army and RUC.

A pattern for the rest of the tour surfaced, with the placing of the use of these weapons in the context of imperialism. It was not just a question of civil rights but an integral part of a strategy involving partition, discrimination, criminalisation, supergrasses, etc.

WEST BERLIN

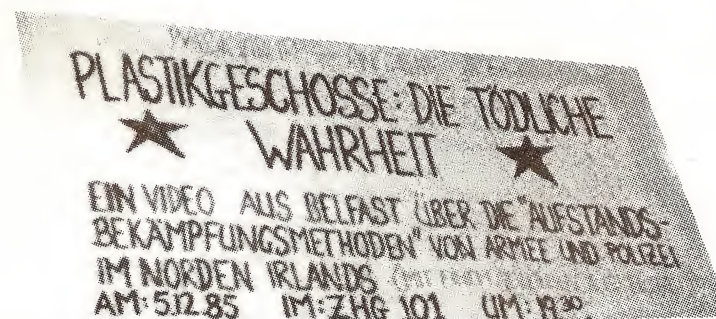
In the city where the 'Allied Forces' are in control, a squatted cultural centre was the venue. In the 'Drug Store', the crowd of mainly young people, probably the most aware in terms of Irish politics, ensured a prolonged debate. It was here too that most interest was expressed in the radical social groups other than the republican groups. There was keen questioning about what anarchists were doing, what they believed in, and their relationship with other movements and campaigns.

People wanted to know about the feminist groups, about what young people were doing, and about the contrasts in demonstrations and protests, with what happens in their own country.

DEATH IN MUNICH

In this context it is worth explaining the recent riots in W.Germany. There had been a series of anti-fascist demonstrations throughout the country. In Munich the police attacked with their usual ferocity, Gunter Sare was a militant who withdrew last. The water canons had dispersed everyone else. He was knocked to the ground by a jet of water, but the truck passed on. A second truck however turned a corner and headed straight for him. He received multiple injuries and died.

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For the following week there were protests in every major city and town in W.Germany. Frequently these led to confrontations with the police, and resulted in many arrests. Banks and large shops had their windows smashed. Slogans appeared everywhere.

There was no central group organising these events. In any one city, groups of individuals who knew and trusted each other, who had worked together before came together while the protests lasted.

HAMBURG

'Haffenstrasser' is the name of a street in Hamburg, which we will probably hear more of in the coming months. Several large five-story terraced houses make up a squatted area, looking over W.Germany's biggest harbour. About 250 people live there, and spend a lot of their time renovating (plastering, rewiring, etc.)

The housing authority in Hamburg had been negotiating leases with Haffenstrasser, and other squats for some time. But the squats wanted more than the three year lease proposed.

After the riots, the right-wing in the town council saw an opportunity to strike. There was a concerted campaign in the press, accusing Haffenstrasser of being the centre of planning for the riots; and even suggesting it was sheltering the RAF guerrillas (this last point was absurd, as a guerrilla, for security reasons could not live in such an openly active place). The police eventually surrounded the squats, in full riot gear, ready for an assault.

But the occupants had got wind of this. Through their support network, several hundred people had gathered both inside and outside the buildings. To secure an eviction, a pitched battle would have been necessary, as the police no longer had the element of surprise. The town council decided the political consequences (given the recent riots and death) would have been disastrous, and the cops withdrew. A victory for the squatters, if only temporary.

SUPERGRASS SYSTEM

It was in the Haffenstrasser, that the largest meeting of the tour was held. Much of the same ground as before was covered. There was also added interest in the two republican movements. In particular the workings of the supergrass system was the object of discussion. The close collaboration between British and W.Germany counter-insurgency methods was not lost on the meeting.

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SWEDEN

A different country and very different meetings. The hosts were people who had taken a year off to study at a 'Skurup' (a college where you choose any one subject, with no qualification at the end, except satisfaction).

The most striking aspect of Sweden, on this occasion, was the almost total reliance (more than any other European country) on British propaganda about what is happening in Ireland. Children learn English at primary school. Young people want to go to London to work, or for the cultural excitement of rock 'musik'. Their T.V. and press reproduce, without criticism, British misinformation, and most people have no reason to question it. In any case, Ireland seems as far away as S.Africa. But one big difference is that there is no sizeable solidarity group on Ireland. There are ones for S.Africa, and Chile.

COUNTER INFORMATION

However, because Sweden is a neutral country, and with a reasonable standard of living, most Swedes have few axes to grind, internationally speaking. As such, if you present another point of view of what the British are responsible for in Ireland, they are inclined to believe you. Especially if you talk to them in person, are open to questioning, and show a video of what goes on in the name of British 'peace-keeping'.

'RELIGIOUS WAR'

One of the main planks of British propaganda is the 'religious war' theme. So discussions often centred around the divisions of the working class, created by imperialism, and institutionalised by partition. On why 'protestant' working class people identify with the loyalist state. On how partition created a monopoly for the Catholic Church in the education system in the south; for the Protestant church in the state sector in the north, and a corresponding Catholic monopoly in the (previous) non-state sector.

SKURUP

There were five meetings in Malmo, Sweden. The first was held in the Skurup (school) attended by young and older. A young punk wanted to know how punks in Belfast, from differing backgrounds, met together. The examples of the Labour Club gigs, and the cafe above Just Books were given. But the inadequacies of venues, in contrast to Sweden, were highlighted. An older man remembered the campaign in the early 70's for contraceptives in the south - his wife had gone on the 'contraceptives train' from Belfast to Dublin. His father had been a pacifist, he said. But there were two occasions when he would pick up a gun. One was if the USSR invaded Sweden. The other was if the pope came to visit Sweden!

MUSIC

A cultural centre in Malmo, Hamburgstadt, which the council was threatening to withdraw money from, was the venue for the second meeting. There was general interest in Irish history, and special interest in music as an expression of resistance, and a force for social change. Good contacts were made for exchange of information, and hopefully music groups. (Anyone interested, should contact Ainriail). It was announced that there were plans to hold a demonstration in Stockholm on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, and to encourage a similar one in Copenhagen, Denmark.

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at the same time as the SDLP were canvassing support for the upcoming mini-election, based on the Anglo-Irish accord.

STRATEGY

But what else could have been done? We have to accept that the last hunger strike did not win all the demands, despite its colossal support. This strike could not have mobilised the same numbers on the streets.

However its strength lay in a much wider-spread antipathy towards the supergrass system. For example, the loyalist Families for Legal Rights supported the demands. It may have taken less numbers to have exerted the same pressure.

Also, there are indications from the two hunger-strikes of late '80 and '81, that more direct protests such as occupations and traffic disruption, could have been more effective than tens of thousands of people being walked up (or down) the Falls Rd. The propaganda of murals and slogans was effective in creating an atmosphere of mass support.

It is a pity that Jimmy Brown, in his letter to the Andytown News of 11-1-86, was not more specific. "During the last four years, many politicians and clerics have protested their opposition to the supergrass, but have made no serious efforts to end it. While we welcome and encourage the efforts of our relatives in seeking support from all quarters, we urge them to be careful who they place trust in. This is particularly true of those cynical and manipulative elements in the media and elsewhere."

Instead we should be relying on our community and cultural groups, on our political and trade-union groups, on our own class.

SCHOOL

Up to this point in the tour, all of the meetings were attended by sympathetic people, people who already knew something about Ireland, and who wanted more information.

A breakthrough was made in bringing the video into a local 6th form school. Three classes in a row one morning, proved to be one of the most demanding, and rewarding, periods of the tour. About thirty pupils in each class listened attentively to a ten minute history of Ireland(!), and watched three excerpts from the video, before a brief but intense discussion. Only one pupil had ever heard of Plastic Bullets (the teachers hadn't, either), and he only knew they were used in Chile.

The power of the video, of the experiences of parents, of eyewitness accounts, of the sight of John Downes being shot, of the ages of the children killed, shocked them. How could such things happen? How could Britain be responsible for these deaths and injuries, and get away with it?

After each meeting, there was a request for people to support the United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets and to protest in some way. There were demonstrations to be attended, and letters to be written. Most people promised, at least, to write to the NIO and call for an end to the use of plastic bullets.

But as important was the beginning, in some cases, of a process of counter-information, and a consolidation of that process in others.

International solidarity is hard to beat!

Lignite on the Loughshore

REVIEW

Lignite has become a much more popular fuel since oil prices began to rise dramatically in the 1970's. It is basically a substance in the intermediate stage between peat and coal. Substantial deposits of lignite have been found recently in Co. Antrim (at Crumlin and Ballymoney), in Co. Derry (at Agivey) and in East Tyrone next to Lough Neagh. Exploratory mining has already begun at Crumlin. The Dept. of Economic Development has stated its intention to award a prospecting licence for East Tyrone to BP Coals Ltd. after January '86. A major consequence of this will be to wipe out a whole community.

OPEN CAST MINING

This type of mining is the most economical way of mining lignite. It involves removing the top layers of soil and clay leaving the lignite exposed. Once the lignite is extracted the soil and clays are filled back in. In Mooretown, the area of this proposed mining, subsequent widescale flooding would occur. Once the top layers are replaced the new surface land level would be lower than before and flooding from the adjacent Lough Neagh would occur.

MOORETOWN AND THE LAW

Over 1,000 people live in Mooretown. Out of 266 households in the area 98 depend on fishing on Lough Neagh while 47 households carry on mixed farming. These livelihoods would be destroyed by the proposed mining. This community is opposed to open cast lignite mining in the area.

THE LAW

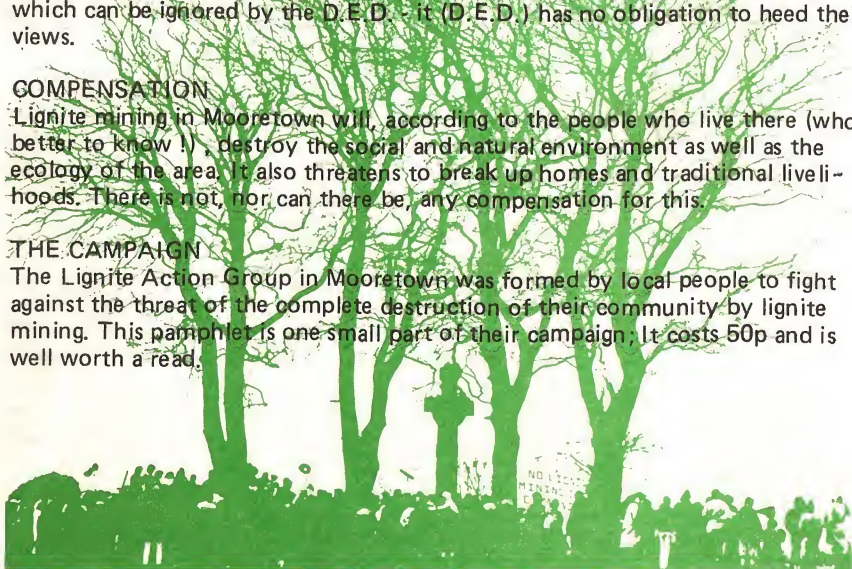
Despite the community's opposition to this it has practically no influence or power to stop it. The D.E.D. is obliged to take into account representations made to it by local people. This is the only opportunity people have to influence what happens their community - i.e. by making 'representations' which can be ignored by the D.E.D. - it (D.E.D.) has no obligation to heed their views.

COMPENSATION

Lignite mining in Mooretown will, according to the people who live there (who better to know!), destroy the social and natural environment as well as the ecology of the area. It also threatens to break up homes and traditional livelihoods. There is not, nor can there be, any compensation for this.

THE CAMPAIGN

The Lignite Action Group in Mooretown was formed by local people to fight against the threat of the complete destruction of their community by lignite mining. This pamphlet is one small part of their campaign; It costs 50p and is well worth a read.



Pamphlet available from LAG, 84 Drumaney Rd., Cookestown, & Just Books.